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Nationale Produktion und nationale Berufsgliederung. By DR.
HERMANN LOSCH. Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1892.

Losch wishes to show in his highly interesting and instructive book, that Germany must adopt a new policy in regard to production, if she is not gradually to be quite crowded out of the world-market by foreign competition. According to the author's view, the industrial life of Germany, as indeed of Western Europe, is seriously threatened by American competition, because in the United States ruthless organization and purely industrial technique have made such strides. Their superiority in the world-market, the shortening of the hours of labor, the high wages,—all these have their common cause in the technical improvement in the production of commodities. Also in Western Europe, the technique of individual trades has perfected itself; but the weak point of this development lies in its want of system and of combination, and in the insufficient extension of large industry. It is necessary to combine more the processes of the small concerns and thereby arrive at greater results in the way of total production.

In a statistical and technical survey of the different fields of national production and their divisions according to trades, the author undertakes to show in detail how much labor and capital is wasted by the noncentralized method of production. For instance a comparison of the manufacture of tobacco in countries where this is a monopoly and in those where it is not, shows that in the former many thousand fewer workmen are necessary for the manufacture of the same amount of the product. A list of different branches of production are investigated in this way,—milling, brewing, mining, manufacture of machines and textiles, and in all cases the author tries to prove how much labor could be saved by more extensive organization, and shows that in point of enthusiasm, inclination and advertising there would be a very great economy in the big industry.

On the basis of these statistical and technical investigations, the author comes to the following conclusion as to what results would attend more systematic production, conducted on a large scale: (1) In the trades examined the average labor period, if in fact it amounted to twelve hours, would be reduced to nine and three-tenths hours, without the quality or quantity of the commodity produced being affected. (2) The amount of commodities could, under State management, be increased twenty-nine per cent in the industries in question, taking existing technical proficiency as a starting point, and allowing the hours of labor to remain the same. This increase would mean an equal gain for the income of the nation. (3) The adoption of the ten hour working day for the whole laboring population of Germany would be secured.

The author proposes, for the realization of his ideals, that national trade-unions should be formed over all Germany; that these trade-unions, after previous inquiry into the demand, should produce in accordance with a common plan.

Interestingly written as Losch's book is, his practical suggestions appear to us much too far-reaching and not unquestionable. He is certainly right when he regrets the dissociated condition of many branches of production, and criticises the backward state of technical knowledge in the small industries. But if his ideals were realized, we should have to look out for new drawbacks. Through these national associations for production, all the small trades would be made impossible, and only large industry would survive. This would be a cause for regret on account of the numerous advantages which the small concern has in many branches of production. Individual taste would then have to yield to the uniform scheme of these centralized industries. And even then would Losch's plan do away with the chief evil, overproduction and speculation? Certainly not. The national unions should, indeed, calculate the public demand, but they would not be able to do so on account of the ever varying taste of the public. So long, at any rate, as the individualistic method of economy continues, such a correspondence of supply and demand cannot be attained: but in this great association, errors would have much worse consequences than in small industries. Therefore it seems better to permit the formation of trusts to go on more spontaneously, but not to regard the general spread of national trusts as exactly the panacea for all social ills. There is also great danger that these national trade associations would lead us directly into State socialism, since the State would not very long leave the regulation of national production to the officials of these unions. That the author is not altogether averse to such socialistic ideas is evidenced by his plan for agricultural production, which he thinks should be so conducted that the farmers should be subject, as regards the cultivation of the soil, to regulations emanating from a national agricultural commission. In fact, that would amount to State control of agricultural production.

KARL DIEHL.

[Translated by Ellen C. Semple.]

A Student's Manual of English Constitutional History. By DUDLEY JULIUS MEDLEY, M. A. Pp. 583. London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1894.